

“From peer support to proactive action: How psychological empowerment bridges social context and faculty proactivity in higher education”

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FROM PEER SUPPORT TO PROACTIVE ACTION: HOW PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT BRIDGES SOCIAL CONTEXT AND FACULTY PROACTIVITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Abstract

Proactive work behavior is crucial for innovation and the quality of higher education; however, studies on social contextual factors remain limited. This study aims to examine the role of psychological empowerment as a mechanism linking contextual factors, such as coworker support and initiative-oriented team climate, to proactive work behavior among faculty members. Using a cross-sectional online survey, primary data were collected from May to July 2025 among 203 active faculty members at various universities in Indonesia ($M = 40.42$; 75.4% female) and analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM) via path analysis in Mplus. The initial saturated model indicated that coworker support ($\beta = 0.072$; $p = 0.406$) and initiative team climate ($\beta = 0.060$; $p = 0.446$) did not have a significant direct effect on proactive work behavior. The final parsimonious model ($\chi^2/df = 1.254$; $p = 0.286$; RMSEA = 0.035; CFI = 0.993; TLI = 0.982; SRMR = 0.042) indicates that psychological empowerment directly influences proactive work behavior ($\beta = 0.498$; $p < 0.001$). Moreover, psychological empowerment was found to be an "indirect-only" statistical mediator of the effect of coworker support ($\beta = 0.113$; $p = 0.009$) and initiative team climate ($\beta = 0.091$; $p = 0.028$) on proactive work behavior, with total variances (R -squared) of 13.1% and 24.8%, respectively. Ultimately, higher education institutions must design systems of coworker support and a collaborative team climate that foster psychological empowerment, as contextual resources will not lead to proactive actions unless faculty members feel psychologically empowered.

Keywords

empowerment, proactivity, climate, coworkers, faculty, education

JEL Classification

D23, M12, I23

INTRODUCTION

Today's work environment is more dynamic and complex, making adaptability a necessity. As work becomes more dynamic and decentralized, proactive work behavior can be a decisive and critical factor in an organization's success (Crant, 2000; Parker & Collins, 2010). These dynamics are not limited to the commercial sector but have also extended into higher education. Thus, universities must navigate global competition and the ever-evolving demands of the market (Ahmed, 2025; Erlyani et al., 2024; Meria et al., 2023).

In Indonesia, sweeping reforms have been implemented to continuously improve education quality. This has resulted in lecturers facing an extremely heavy workload due to high expectations regarding the fulfillment of the Tridharma of Higher Education (education, re-

search, and community service), which run concurrently with bureaucratic pressures and accreditation requirements related to academic performance (Alamanda et al., 2026; Effendi et al., 2025). Therefore, faculty members are not only responsible for transferring knowledge but also serve as key agents of change to proactively anticipate future academic challenges (Meria et al., 2023). Therefore, proactive work behavior has become one of the key competencies that need to be cultivated. Proactive work behavior is self-initiated, future-focused, and involves the ability to take control in driving change (Parker & Collins, 2010).

Although research on proactive work behavior has expanded globally and received significant attention in the Indonesian context, existing studies have largely focused on individual traits or factors influenced by leadership (Aryani et al., 2025; Eliyana et al., 2024; Satwika et al., 2025a; Syamsudin et al., 2022; Yuspahruddin et al., 2024). The current literature still leaves several limitations that need to be addressed (Cai et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2019; Pratama et al., 2023). First, research related to social context factors beyond leadership variables still needs to be conducted (Cai et al., 2019; Parker et al., 2019). In fact, working individuals interact more frequently with their team members than with their leaders (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). An excessive focus on the leader figure has led to the roles of the group and the surrounding social environment receiving insufficient attention in the literature on proactive work behavior (Cai et al., 2019; Pratama et al., 2023).

Second, research on the psychological mechanisms underlying the role of the external social environment in proactive behavior remains scarce. Current literature still has limited discussion of mediators beyond proactive motivation in influencing proactive work behavior (Cai et al., 2019). The social environment at work does not automatically foster proactive behavior unless it successfully alters individuals' psychological and cognitive states. In this context, understanding the role of psychological empowerment as a variable beyond proactive motivation in influencing proactive work behavior becomes crucial. Third, the literature on proactive work behavior has not yet paid much attention to the influence of teams (Cai et al., 2019; Pratama et al., 2023).

These limitations highlight the scientific need to expand the model of proactive work behavior by integrating horizontal social context factors and psychological empowerment mechanisms, particularly in the context of faculty members. Addressing this issue is crucial for higher education administrators to systematically design work environments that structurally and psychologically foster a proactive faculty workforce.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the mechanisms that drive proactive work behavior, a comprehensive analysis of personal circumstances and the surrounding social environment is necessary. Based on social cognitive theory, this literature review summarizes existing research on proactive work behavior, psychological empowerment, coworker support, and team initiative climate. This study defines two forms of horizontal social environments. Coworker support and team initiative climate are two forms of horizontal social environments that operate within different scopes. Coworker support refers to interpersonal social, emotional, and instrumental support among peers. Meanwhile,

team initiative climate operates at the group level and describes a shared perception of the extent to which the team environment supports, values, and expects proactive actions and risk-taking. In short, coworker support provides a sense of social security, while team initiative climate provides direction and standards for group behavior.

Previous literature on proactive work behavior has largely focused on vertical organizational factors, particularly leadership styles and top-down management practices, as the primary drivers of individual proactivity (Cai et al., 2019). This indicates a theoretical gap because it fails to adequately account for the influence of horizontal social contexts, such as peer dynamics and collective norms

at the team level (Parker et al., 2019; Pratama et al., 2023). Furthermore, the existing literature relies heavily on proactive motivation to explain how the environment triggers behavior, leaving alternative cognitive-psychological mechanisms largely unexplored (Cai et al., 2019). To address this conceptual gap, this study synthesizes prior research by integrating coworker support and initiative team climate as two variables of the horizontal social context, while identifying psychological empowerment as the primary internal cognitive mechanism that bridges these external environmental stimuli with faculty members' proactive work behavior.

1.1. Proactive work behavior

Proactive work behavior originates from the individual, is future-focused, and is oriented toward change (Crant, 2000; Parker et al., 2006). Proactive work behavior comprises four components. Taking charge involves voluntary and constructive efforts to bring about functional organizational change. Voice involves innovative suggestions for change and recommending modifications to standard procedures even when others disagree. Individual innovation involves the creation and implementation of ideas. Finally, problem prevention consists of independent and anticipatory actions to prevent the recurrence of problems at work (Parker & Collins, 2010).

In developing proactive work behavior, Parker et al. (2006) draw on Bandura's social cognitive theory. This theory proposes a model of triadic reciprocal determinism, in which three factors (environment, person, and behavior) interact and influence one another. Humans are not merely passive products of their environment, but rather active, reflective agents capable of self-regulation. Based on this theory, proactive actions arise from an individual's cognitive-motivational states after observing their environment. If individuals believe they can control a situation and handle the risks associated with their initiatives, they will exercise their agency and act proactively (Bandura, 1991; Parker et al., 2006).

A number of previous studies have categorized the antecedents and consequences of proactive work behavior into several categories. Researchers gen-

erally categorize the factors that trigger proactive work behavior into individual aspects (such as personality), job characteristics, leadership behavior, team dynamics, and organizational aspects (such as organizational climate). Meanwhile, its impacts range from individual-level outcomes and work performance to team effectiveness (Cai et al., 2019; Pratama et al., 2023; Satwika et al., 2025a). Based on this framework, the scope of horizontal interactions among coworkers and the climate of initiative at the team level are crucial to explore to expand the scope of sociopsychological studies in higher education settings.

1.2. Psychological empowerment as a mediator

Psychological empowerment is defined as an individual's belief regarding the extent to which they can influence their work environment, their capabilities, the significance of their work, and the autonomy they feel in their work (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2024; Robbins & Judge, 2020). As a motivational construct, psychological empowerment is manifested through four main cognitive dimensions. Meaning refers to the alignment of work values with individual aspirations. Competence is self-efficacy regarding the ability to perform tasks. Self-determination reflects autonomy in initiating actions. Impact describes the extent to which an individual can influence strategic outcomes in the workplace (Spreitzer, 1995). Within the framework of social cognitive theory, psychological empowerment represents a manifestation of a person's internal cognitive components that bridge external environmental stimuli with behavioral responses.

Psychological empowerment serves as a motivational driver that triggers positive emotional responses and constructive behavior in individuals (Cai et al., 2019; Llorente-Alonso et al., 2023). This strengthened sense of empowerment makes employees feel more at ease and confident, thereby enhancing their intrinsic motivation to solve problems, seek information, and create innovations (Arefin et al., 2015; Matsuo et al., 2021). Therefore, when an organization builds an environment that fosters meaning, competence, autonomy, and influence, employees will be more proactive in making contributions beyond their formal job descriptions.

1.3. Coworker support, psychological empowerment, and proactive work behavior

Coworker support refers to an individual's belief about the extent to which coworkers are willing to provide supportive assistance in performing their tasks, both emotionally and instrumentally (Ng & Sorensen, 2008; Susskind et al., 2003). Coworker support has two aspects: emotional support and instrumental support. Instrumental support refers to tangible assistance, such as guidance, materials, physical resources, or the knowledge needed to perform specific tasks. Meanwhile, emotional support focuses on the human aspect and encompasses feelings of acceptance and recognition. This can be demonstrated by showing love, care, trust, friendship, and empathy toward other workers (Darke et al., 2024; Settoon & Mossholder, 2002; Tews et al., 2013).

In this study, coworker support serves as a crucial environmental resource that influences proactive work behavior. Faculty members who feel that their behavior is supported or accepted by their coworkers will be reinforced in the belief that their behavior is accepted by their peers. This can minimize the feeling that the proactive work behavior they exhibit will create a socially detrimental situation in the workplace (Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, coworker support also influences an individual's proactive work behavior through psychological empowerment by boosting their self-confidence.

Coworker support helps individuals develop greater confidence in their abilities. Individuals who view themselves as competent are more likely to take on additional responsibilities and act proactively (Chen et al., 2018). Furthermore, psychologically empowered individuals view their work environment as something they can change through their actions. This makes them more motivated to initiate internally driven, future-oriented actions (Smithikrai, 2022). Empirical evidence consistently shows that coworker support predicts employees' psychological empowerment (Corsun & Enz, 1999; Hamouda et al., 2018; Seibert et al., 2011). It acts as an environmental resource that provides a sense of social security; however, its effectiveness in driving concrete action requires prior cognitive

internalization. Therefore, this indirect relationship positions psychological empowerment as a mediating variable that bridges the two constructs.

1.4. Initiative team climate, psychological empowerment, and proactive work behavior

An initiative climate refers to organizational practices and procedures, both formal and informal, that guide and support a proactive, self-directed, and persistent approach to work (Baer & Frese, 2003). In contrast to interpersonal support from coworkers, the initiative team climate represents the macro-environment at the team level that shapes the group's collective norms (Baer & Frese, 2003; Frese et al., 1997). While coworker support stimulates lecturers' cognitive states through a sense of interpersonal security, the initiative team climate operates through the internalization of group norms. Based on the triadic model of social cognitive theory outlined earlier, the initiative climate acts as a team-level environmental element that influences lecturers' personal elements. This climate encourages faculty members to seek opportunities and share information because they share the perception that proactive attitudes are behaviors the team expects and values (Cai et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2021).

A group atmosphere that values initiative and risk-taking provides faculty members with a greater sense of control and autonomy over their work, which is at the core of psychological empowerment (Nwanzu & Babalola, 2024; Sinha et al., 2016). Various empirical studies have demonstrated that the climate at both the organizational and team levels serves as a strategic antecedent in stimulating employees' psychological empowerment. A work environment that emphasizes ethics, psychological comfort, freedom of expression, and innovation has been empirically shown to strengthen individuals' sense of meaning and autonomy at work (Akkoç et al., 2022; Carless, 2004; Frazier & Fainshmidt, 2012; Liu et al., 2019; Lv et al., 2021). Among the various forms of organizational climate, the initiative team climate holds particular significance in this study because it specifically reflects group norms that prioritize an active work approach.

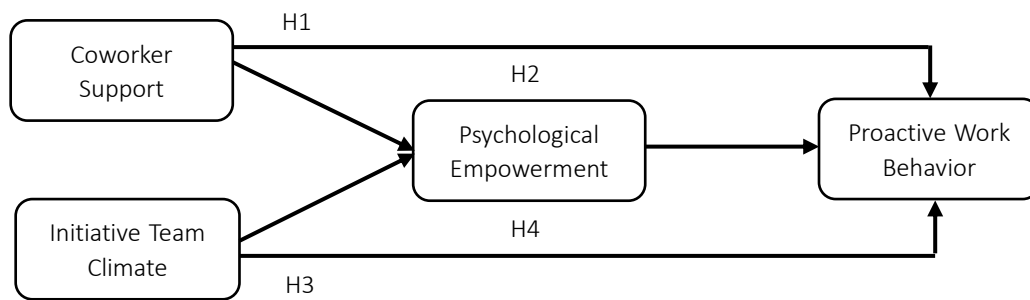


Figure 1. Conceptual model

This climate demands and supports team members to take initiative, act proactively, and show strong perseverance in overcoming work obstacles, which directly influences and enhances their psychological empowerment (Frese et al., 1997; Liu et al., 2021).

Furthermore, psychological empowerment encourages proactive work behavior (Chen et al., 2018; Kawasaki, 2019; Nwanzu & Babalola, 2024). Psychological empowerment is associated with various aspects of proactive work behavior, such as innovative work behavior (Liu et al., 2019; Lv et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2023; Sinha et al., 2016), taking charge (Boonyarit, 2023), and voice behavior (Boonyarit, 2023; Frazier & Fainshmidt, 2012). An initiative team climate represents a normative group standard; however, this norm will not automatically trigger proactive behavior unless faculty members personally feel they have autonomy and a sense of impact (psychological empowerment) in their work.

1.5. Aim and hypotheses

This literature review confirms that proactive work behavior among faculty members cannot be separated from horizontal social factors and internal cognitive factors in the workplace. Previous studies have shown that coworker support provides an important socio-emotional safety net, while an initiative-oriented team climate sets the group's normative standards for taking risks and initiating independent action. In this context, these two distinct environmental resources do not automatically translate into proactive work behavior unless both are successfully internalized into an individual's cognitive state, a process manifested through psychological empowerment.

Consequently, this study empirically tests the mediating role of psychological empowerment in linking horizontal contextual factors (coworker support and initiative-oriented team climate) to proactive work behavior among college faculty members. Based on this synthesis and the social cognitive theoretical framework, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Coworker support has a positive effect on proactive work behavior.*
- H2: Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between coworker support and proactive work behavior.*
- H3: The initiative team climate has a positive effect on proactive work behavior.*
- H4: Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between the initiative team climate and proactive work behavior.*

The structural alignment, direct influence pathways, and proposed indirect mechanisms among these four variables are integrated and visually illustrated in the conceptual model (Figure 1).

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional approach. It received ethical approval from the Airlangga University Ethics Committee (No. 1196/B/UN3.FPSI/III/TA.00.03/2025).

Data collection was conducted from May to July 2025 using a non-probability convenience sampling combined with an online snowball technique. An electronic questionnaire was distrib-

uted via WhatsApp groups and national social media platforms, with members consisting of active faculty members from various regions in Indonesia. Overall, the sample included faculty members from 101 universities spread across the islands of Java (67.5%), Kalimantan (9.4%), Sumatra (8.4%), and Sulawesi (7.9%); data from some institutions (6.9%) could not be classified due to incomplete information regarding the institution of origin. By institution type, the sample is balanced between the public and private sectors, with 51.2% of faculty members from public universities (including Autonomous State University, Semi-Autonomous State University, and State University) and 48.8% from private universities (see Table 1).

A total of 278 participating respondents completed the survey in full. After data cleansing, 75 responses were excluded during the attention check stage. This check was explicit, requiring respondents to select a specific answer (e.g., “For this question, please select option 5 = Somewhat Agree”) as an indicator that the instructions had been read carefully. Respondents who did not provide the correct answer were excluded from further analysis. Based on this data cleaning procedure, the total number of respondents was 203 (valid response rate = 73%).

To evaluate the potential for systematic bias resulting from this relatively high rate of data exclusion (26.9%), a comparative demographic analysis was conducted between the retained respondent group ($N = 203$) and the excluded respondent group ($N = 75$). The results of the independent samples t -test showed no significant difference in mean age between the two groups ($t(279) = 0.646, p = 0.519$). Meanwhile, a chi-square test on the gender variable revealed a significant difference in proportions between the two groups ($\chi^2(1) = 7.400, p = 0.007$), with the excluded group tending to have a higher proportion of males. Although gender differences existed, they were deemed not to compromise the validity of the main structural model. This indicates that the final sample size ($N = 203$) still provided a strong representation of both genders, met the statistical adequacy requirements for stable WLSMV estimates in MPlus, and that the gender variable was not a conceptual boundary or moderator variable within the theoretical framework of this study.

Respondents were between the ages of 25 and 64 (Mean = 40.42; SD = 7.8), female (75.4%), held a Master's degree as their highest level of education (74.4%), and did not hold a structural position at a university (65.5%). Table 1 provides further demographic details.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics (n = 203)

Category	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	50	24.6%
	Female	153	75.4%
Education	Master's Degree	151	74.4%
	Doctorate	52	25.6%
Marital Status	Married	170	83.7%
	Single	33	16.3%
Functional Position	Junior Lecturer	12	5.9%
	Assistant Professor (Entry Level)	56	27.6%
	Assistant Professor (Mid-Level)	116	57.1%
	Associate Professor	17	8.4%
	Professor	2	1.0%
Employment Status	Civil Servant Lecturer	88	43.3%
	Non-Civil Servant Permanent Lecturer	31	15.3%
	Permanent Lecturer	78	38.4%
	Adjunct Lecturer	6	3.0%
Structural Position	No Position	133	65.5%
	Holding Position	70	34.5%
University	Autonomous State University	38	18.7%
	Semi-Autonomous State University	48	23.6%
	State University	18	8.9%
	Private University	99	48.8%

All measurement scales were adapted from well-established international frameworks. To ensure cross-cultural and linguistic validity, a rigorous forward-backward translation procedure was conducted by independent translators and verified by experts in organizational psychology. Proactive work behavior was measured using the Proactive Work Behavior Scale by Parker and Collins (2010). This scale consists of 13 items and has good psychometric properties, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.88 to 0.951. The scale uses a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (very rarely) to 5 (very often). Psychological empowerment was measured using Spreitzer's (1995) scale, which consists of 12 items. Several researchers have previously used this scale, and it has strong psychometric properties, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.84 to 0.91. The scale uses a 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Coworker support in this study uses a measurement tool adapted from Settoon and Mossholder (2002). This scale has been widely used and yields good psychometric properties, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.87 to 0.95. The scale used a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The initiative team climate was measured using a scale adapted from the initiative climate scale by Baer and Frese (2003). The scale consists of 7 items, yielding good psychometric properties with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.712 to 0.92. The scale provided uses a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Given that the measurement instruments used employed mixed-response scales, specifically, a 5-point Likert scale for the proactive work behavior, coworker support, and initiative team climate instruments, and a 7-point Likert scale for psychological empowerment, the data analysis was conducted in two stages. In the confirmatory factor analysis stage, items were treated as ordinal variables using the WLSMV estimator in Mplus to accurately accommodate the categorical nature and threshold differences of each scale point through polychoric correlations. Next, for the structural model testing, path analysis was conducted using composite scores for each construct to maintain model parsimony. This structural model was estimated

using the MLR (Maximum Likelihood Robust) estimator. All parameters of the final model were interpreted using STDYX standardization to ensure compatibility and comparability across all paths.

In this study, JASP 0.95.0.0 and Mplus 8.3 were used for data analysis. JASP was used for data grouping, descriptive statistics, and related analyses. Mplus was used to evaluate the measurement model and the hypothetical model. Common method bias (CMB) was detected using Harman's single-factor test via exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on all questionnaire items. The results showed that the first factor accounted for only 26.6% of the total variance, which was well below the 50% threshold (Aldhi et al., 2026; Fuller et al., 2016), thus indicating that CMB did not pose a serious threat to data validity. Nevertheless, the Harman test has limitations and does not completely eliminate or guarantee that the model is absolutely free from CMB effects. This is due to the study's single-source and cross-sectional design. To mitigate this procedurally, we strictly enforced respondent anonymity and randomized the order of the instruments during the online survey process to minimize social desirability bias.

Additionally, EFA was also conducted based on the Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues > 1). The analysis results revealed a ten-factor structure that cumulatively explained 57.4% of the total variance. The first factor's eigenvalue was 1.7824, indicating a significant proportion of variance; however, the distribution of remaining variance across subsequent factors confirmed that the data are multidimensional and not dominated by a single construct.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Model fit assessment

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis demonstrate that the four-factor model we hypothesized fits the data better ($X^2 = 1655.256$; $df = 888$; $X^2/df = 1.864$; $p < 0.001$; $RMSEA = 0.065$; $CFI = 0.930$; $TLI = 0.926$; $SRMR = 0.080$) compared to all other alternative models (see Table 2). These results support the uniqueness of the construct.

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement models

Measurement models	χ^2	df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Four-factor	1655.256	888	0.930	0.926	0.080	0.065
Three-factor (PRO, PEM, combined IKL and DUK)	2181.837	891	0.883	0.876	0.097	0.084
Three-factor (DUK, IKL, combined PRO and PEM)	1806.865	891	0.917	0.912	0.088	0.071
Two-factor (Combined PRO and PEM, combined IKL and DUK)	2314.640	893	0.871	0.863	0.104	0.089
Two-factor (Combined PRO and IKL, combined PEM and DUK)	3965.719	901	0.722	0.708	0.149	0.129
One-Factor (Combined PRO, PEM, DUK, IKL)	5018.210	902	0.627	0.609	0.157	0.150

Note: N = 203. PRO = Proactive work behavior, PEM = Psychological empowerment, DUK = Coworker support, IKL = Initiative team climate.

The four-factor measurement model was evaluated based on reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The results for reliability and convergent validity are presented in Table 3. The results show that all items have factor loadings above the acceptability standard of 0.50. Furthermore, the composite reliability (CR) scores for all constructs indicate excellent reliability, as they are well above the 0.70 threshold, with CR values of 0.905 for the proactive work behavior construct and 0.920 for the psychological empowerment construct.

Although the average variance extracted (AVE) values for proactive work behavior (0.464) and psychological empowerment (0.495) are slightly

below the ideal threshold of 0.50, the convergent validity of these two constructs remains acceptable. In accordance with the recommendations of Fornell and Larcker (1981), if the AVE value is below 0.50 but the composite reliability (CR) of the construct is well met (above 0.60), then the convergent validity of the construct is still considered adequate, and the construct can be retained in subsequent analytical models.

In addition, the CR scores for all four constructs were higher than their AVE values, indicating that all four constructs possess strong convergent validity. Discriminant validity was also established because the square root of the AVE for each construct was higher than its correlation

Table 3. Factor loading, CR, and AVE

Constructs	Items coding	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Proactive work behavior	PRO1	0.671	0.905	0.464
	PRO2	0.686		
	PRO3	0.595		
	PRO4	0.609		
	PRO7	0.668		
	PRO8	0.711		
	PRO9	0.744		
	PRO10	0.727		
	PRO11	0.679		
	PRO12	0.728		
	PRO13	0.660		
Psychological empowerment	PEM1	0.681	0.920	0.495
	PEM2	0.852		
	PEM3	0.567		
	PEM4	0.690		
	PEM5	0.843		
	PEM6	0.641		
	PEM7	0.539		
	PEM8	0.573		
	PEM9	0.700		
	PEM10	0.838		
	PEM11	0.735		
	PEM12	0.697		

Table 3 (cont.). Factor loading, CR, and AVE

Constructs	Items coding	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Coworker support	DUK1	0.873	0.962	0.645
	DUK2	0.916		
	DUK3	0.851		
	DUK4	0.777		
	DUK5	0.792		
	DUK6	0.819		
	DUK7	0.625		
	DUK8	0.796		
	DUK9	0.842		
	DUK10	0.851		
	DUK11	0.785		
	DUK12	0.710		
	DUK13	0.835		
	DUK14	0.729		
Initiative Team Climate	IKL1	0.768	0.942	0.703
	IKL2	0.940		
	IKL3	0.943		
	IKL4	0.884		
	IKL5	0.699		
	IKL6	0.727		
	IKL7	0.870		

with other items (Hair et al., 2019) (see Tables 3 and 4). Cronbach's alpha values for the constructs of proactive work behavior, psychological empowerment, coworker support, and initiative team climate were found to be 0.858, 0.846, 0.931, and 0.914, respectively. Meanwhile, the omega values for the four constructs were 0.860, 0.768, 0.933, and 0.910, respectively.

Based on the correlation matrix analysis, psychological empowerment is significantly correlated with proactive work behavior ($r = 0.438$; $p < .001$). Coworker support is also significantly correlated

with proactive work behavior ($r = 0.235$; $p < .001$) and psychological empowerment ($r = 0.349$; $p < .001$). Furthermore, initiative team climate was positively and significantly correlated with proactive work behavior ($r = 0.186$; $p < .01$) and psychological empowerment ($r = 0.335$; $p < .001$) (see Table 4).

Based on the demographic analysis, male faculty members tend to exhibit higher levels of proactive work behavior compared to female faculty members ($r = -0.168$; $p < .01$). Faculty members with higher levels of education also tend to ex-

Table 4. Matrix correlation ($n = 203$)

No.	Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Gender	1.754	0.432	–								
2	Age	40.42	7.806	0.090	–							
3	Education	1.256	0.438	–0.110	0.442***	–						
4	Marital Status	1.163	0.370	–0.027	–0.261***	–0.197**	–					
5	Structural Status	1.345	0.476	–0.042	–0.020	0.073	–0.067	–				
6	IKL	24.63	5.262	–0.044	–0.041	0.063	0.092	0.088	–			
7	DUK	72.75	15.12	–0.132	0.035	0.199**	0.058	0.013	0.495***	–		
8	PEM	69.55	7.549	–0.019	0.185**	0.263***	–0.027	0.067	0.335***	0.349***	–	
9	PRO	40.18	5.841	–0.168*	0.045	0.168*	–0.067	0.061	0.186**	0.235***	0.438***	–

Note: $N = 203$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. PRO = Proactive work behavior, PEM = Psychological empowerment, DUK = Coworker support, IKL = Initiative team climate. Gender (1 = male, 2 = female), Education (1 = master's degree, 2 = Ph.D. degree), Marital Status (1 = married, 2 = single), Structural Status (1 = No Position, 2 = Holding a Position).

hibit higher levels of proactive work behavior ($r = 0.168$; $p < .05$). Lecturers with higher levels of education also significantly exhibit higher levels of psychological empowerment ($r = 0.263$; $p < .001$). Additionally, age ($r = 0.185$; $p < .01$) also significantly influences lecturers' psychological empowerment (see Table 4).

3.2. Hypothesis model evaluation

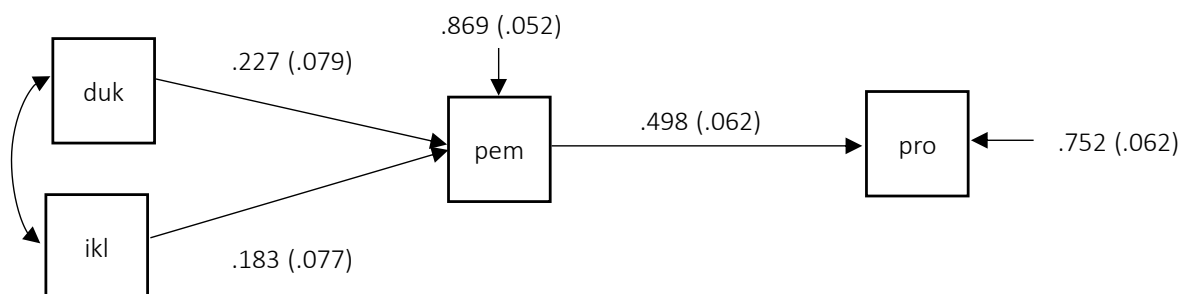
We tested the four variables as a mediation model, including all direct paths, namely, from coworker support to proactive work behavior and from initiative team climate to proactive work behavior, as well as the mediation path through psychological empowerment. The test results indicated that the model was saturated ($df = 0$). Furthermore, path analysis indicated that the direct paths from coworker support to proactive work behavior ($\beta = 0.072$; $p = 0.406$) and from initiative team climate to proactive work behavior ($\beta = 0.060$; $p = 0.446$) were not statistically significant. Therefore, the first hypothesis stating that coworker support has a positive effect on proactive work behavior was rejected. Additionally, the third hypothesis, which states that the initiative team climate has a positive effect on proactive work behavior, was also rejected.

We then modified the model by removing those insignificant paths to produce a better-fitting model. This modified model was subsequently adopted as the final model presented in this study (Figure 2). The analysis results indicate an excellent model fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.254$; $p = 0.286$; RMSEA = 0.035; CFI = 0.993; TLI = 0.982; SRMR = 0.042).

Based on this final model, proactive work behavior is significantly influenced by psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.498$; $p < 0.001$). On the other hand, psychological empowerment is significantly influenced by coworker support ($\beta = 0.227$; $p < 0.01$) and initiative team climate ($\beta = 0.183$; $p < 0.05$) (see Table 5). Overall, the variables in this model explain 13.1% of the variance (R -squared) in psychological empowerment ($p = 0.011$) and 24.8% of the variance in proactive work behavior ($p < 0.001$).

The mediation test indicates that the second hypothesis, which states that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between coworker support and proactive work behavior, is accepted. Since the direct path from coworker support to proactive work behavior was not significant in the initial model, this relationship was categorized as indirect-only statistical mediation with a standardized indirect effect (β) of 0.113 ($p < 0.05$; 95% CI = [0.028 to 0.197]).

Furthermore, an initiative team climate has a significant indirect effect on proactive work behavior through psychological empowerment ($\beta = 0.091$; $p < 0.01$; 95% CI = [0.010 to 0.172]). This indicates indirect-only statistical mediation because the direct path was not significant in the initial test. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis, which states that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between initiative team climate and proactive work behavior, is accepted. All standardized parameter estimates (STDYX), standard errors (SE), p -values, and confidence intervals for the final model are summarized in Table 5.



Note: PRO = Proactive work behavior, PEM = Psychological empowerment, DUK = Coworker support, IKL = Initiative team climate.

Figure 2. Structural model

Table 5. Comparison of initial (saturated) model and final (parsimonious) model results

Parameter/Path	Initial Saturated Model (df = 0)	Final Parsimonious Model (df = 2)			
	Estimate (β)	Estimate (β)	S.E	p	95%CI
Directs Effects					
PEM $\rightarrow$ PRO	0.456	0.498	0.062	0.000	[0.376 s.d 0.620]
DUK $\rightarrow$ PEM	0.227	0.227	0.079	0.004	[0.073 s.d 0.380]
IKL $\rightarrow$ PEM	0.183	0.183	0.077	0.018	[0.032 s.d 0.334]
DUK $\rightarrow$ PRO	0.072			0.406	
IKL $\rightarrow$ PRO	0.060			0.446	
Indirect Effects					
DUK $\rightarrow$ PEM $\rightarrow$ PRO	0.106	0.113	0.043	0.009	[0.028 s.d 0.197]
IKL $\rightarrow$ PEM $\rightarrow$ PRO	0.085	0.091	0.041	0.028	[0.010 s.d 0.172]
Model Fit Indices					
Chi-Square (X^2)	0.000	2.507			
Degrees of Freedom (df)	0	2			
p-value	1.000	0.286			
CFI/TLI	1.000/1.000	0.993/0.982			
RMSEA	0.000	0.035			
SRMR	0.000	0.042			

Note: N = 203. PRO = Proactive work behavior, PEM = Psychological empowerment, DUK = Coworker support, IKL = Initiative team climate.

4. DISCUSSION

In Indonesia's higher education system, faculty work involves a high degree of autonomy and complexity. The demands of the Tridharma of Higher Education, namely, teaching, research, and community service, require faculty members not only to fulfill their formal duties but also to initiate academic innovation, research, and collaboration. Based on structural equation modeling, this study demonstrates that Hypothesis 1 (H1), which posits a direct effect of coworker support on proactive work behavior, is rejected. Similarly, Hypothesis 3 (H3), which posits a direct effect of initiative team climate on proactive work behavior, is also rejected. Conversely, the results prove that coworker support and initiative team climate have a positive and significant effect on proactive work behavior only through full mediation of psychological empowerment.

The rejection of the first hypothesis indicates that although previous studies have demonstrated the direct role of coworker support in influencing an individual's proactive work behavior (Chen & Hu, 2023; Love & Dustin, 2014; Parker et al., 2006), this role does not manifest as emotional or tangible support. Coworker courtesy, interactions, and trust tend to focus on the rela-

tional quality of the environment and provide a sense of psychological safety, whereas coworker support is more closely tied to daily tasks. When individuals are continuously provided with instrumental support without feeling empowered, there is a risk that they will become more dependent on their coworkers and fail to exhibit proactive work behavior. Therefore, psychological empowerment is necessary to determine whether such support makes them feel more capable of engaging in proactive work behavior.

On the other hand, the rejection of the third hypothesis explains why the team initiative climate is less able to directly influence faculty members' proactive work behavior, as the team initiative climate in this concept tends to represent behavioral norms regarding initiative-taking that are accepted within the team. This does not automatically translate into an individual's personal motivation to engage in proactive work behavior. Proactive work behavior requires intrinsic motivation to drive lecturers to engage in high-risk behaviors (Cai et al., 2019), particularly for lecturers with a high degree of autonomy in completing their tasks.

This is consistent with social cognitive theory, which posits that human actions result from the

reciprocal relationship between behavior, the environment, and cognitive states (triadic reciprocal determinism) (Feist et al., 2017). Coworker support and initiative-oriented team climate act as environmental variables that strengthen faculty members' self-efficacy. Psychological empowerment acts as a cognitive mechanism through which individuals transform social support and social norms into a belief in their own competence and autonomy. Without the internalization of this support and these norms into a sense of empowerment, coworker support and an initiative-oriented climate will merely create a supportive environment without necessarily triggering internal, proactive initiatives. This aligns with Bandura's (1991) perspective that an individual's belief in their own capabilities determines the extent to which they will strive, persevere, and remain steadfast in the face of obstacles.

This process indicates that environmental factors do not automatically drive proactive work behavior. Coworker support – whether instrumental or emotional – and a team climate that encourages initiative must first enhance faculty members' perceptions of meaning, autonomy, and competence in their work. This sense of empowerment triggers a belief in the impact of their actions, which in turn drives proactive behavior. Faculty members who have control over their work will be more motivated to take proactive actions for future progress (Smithikrai, 2022).

Consistent with a previous meta-analysis (Satwika et al., 2025b), this study also found that psychological empowerment acts as a mediator between social factors and proactive work behavior. Coworker support and an initiative-oriented team climate must first influence proactive work behavior through psychological empowerment. The influence of coworker support and an initiative-oriented team climate in this context depends on the extent to which individuals interpret and internalize their psychological state.

4.1. Theoretical contribution and practical implication

This study makes several important contributions to the development of the literature on

proactive work behavior. First, these findings reinforce the role of psychological empowerment as a key psychological mechanism that bridges the relationship between social factors and proactive work behavior. The results indicate that psychological empowerment fully mediates the relationship between coworker support, initiative team climate, and proactive work behavior. These results confirm that individual internal processes are an essential element in explaining individual behavior, particularly in the context of university faculty. Second, in higher education, these results make a specific contribution by showing that the formation of proactive work behavior among faculty differs from that in business organizational contexts. High job autonomy makes psychological factors more dominant than social factors.

These findings have practical implications for faculty management in higher education institutions. First, improving faculty members' proactive work behavior requires more than just policies or the creation of a supportive organizational climate; it is also necessary to ensure that these policies and support measures effectively enhance faculty members' psychological empowerment. For example, through the provision of genuine academic autonomy, research collaboration, a culture of knowledge sharing, faculty involvement in decision-making, and recognition of academic contributions. Second, empowerment-based interventions need to be a primary focus. Faculty members who feel competent, have autonomy, and see the impact of their work are more likely to be active in fostering innovation and change.

4.2. Limitations and further research directions

This study also has several limitations. First, this study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to draw causal conclusions. Future research might use a longitudinal design to understand the dynamics of the relationship over time or an experimental study to provide a cause-and-effect explanation. Second, data collected via self-report may introduce common method bias. This can lead to estimates of the relationship between variables being higher

than they actually are. The use of multi-source data, such as evaluations by supervisors or co-workers, could enhance the validity of the results and reduce self-report bias. Third, this study's model includes only one mediator: psychological empowerment. However, Parker et al.'s (2010) proactive motivation model and the multilevel review conducted by Cai et al. (2019) found that several types of proactive motivation conditions can influence proactive work behavior. Future research should test additional mediators such as role breadth self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, positive affect, and so on, or examine moderator variables such as organiza-

tional culture, leadership, or individual characteristics like proactive personality. Fourth, this study focuses on university faculty members in Indonesia. Given that the structure of higher education institutions can be influenced by a country's governance system, any generalization of the findings to the cultures of other countries must be made with caution. Future research should broaden the scope by comparing the results with those of lecturers or educational staff, lecturers at public or private universities, and across countries. This will help determine whether the mechanisms of psychological empowerment are universal or context-specific.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine the mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between workplace social factors, represented by coworker support and initiative team climate, and proactive work behavior among college faculty members in Indonesia. The empirical analysis provides evidence that coworker support ($\beta = 0.072$; $p = 0.406$) and initiative team climate ($\beta = 0.060$; $p = 0.446$) do not have a significant direct effect on proactive work behavior. However, testing for indirect effects demonstrated that psychological empowerment acts as an indirect-only mediator, significantly bridging the influence of coworker support ($\beta = 0.113$; $p = 0.009$) and initiative team climate ($\beta = 0.091$; $p = 0.028$) in stimulating faculty members' proactive work behavior. The practical implications of these findings underscore that university management cannot simply rely on providing group work facilities or superficial peer support; rather, it must strategically design work systems that actively foster a sense of autonomy, competence, and task meaningfulness (psychological empowerment) among faculty members so that proactive actions and educational innovation can be effectively realized.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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Funding acquisition: Pratista Arya Satwika.

Investigation: Pratista Arya Satwika.

Methodology: Pratista Arya Satwika, Samian.

Project administration: Pratista Arya Satwika, Samian.

Resources: Pratista Arya Satwika.

Software: Pratista Arya Satwika.

Supervision: Samian, Fendy Suhariadi.

Validation: Pratista Arya Satwika, Samian, Fendy Suhariadi.

Visualization: Pratista Arya Satwika.

Writing – original draft: Pratista Arya Satwika.

Writing – review & editing: Samian, Pratista Arya Satwika, Fendy Suhariadi.

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